

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

**CIVIL MINUTES - GENERAL**

Case No.	CV 14-1920 PA (JCx)	Date	March 26, 2014
Title	James Lomas v. ABF Freight System, Inc., et al.		

Present: The Honorable	PERCY ANDERSON, UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE		
Paul Songco	Not Reported		N/A
Deputy Clerk	Court Reporter		Tape No.
Attorneys Present for Plaintiffs:		Attorneys Present for Defendants:	
None		None	

**Proceedings:** IN CHAMBERS - COURT ORDER

Before the Court is a Notice of Removal filed by defendants ABF Freight System, Inc., Kelly Underwood, and Bob Hopkins ("Defendants") on March 13, 2014. Defendants assert that this Court has jurisdiction over the action brought against them by plaintiff James Lomas ("Plaintiff") based on the Court's diversity jurisdiction. See 28 U.S.C. § 1332.

Federal courts are courts of limited jurisdiction, having subject matter jurisdiction only over matters authorized by the Constitution and Congress. See, e.g., Kokkonen v. Guardian Life Ins. Co., 511 U.S. 375, 377, 114 S. Ct. 1673, 1675, 128 L. Ed. 2d 391 (1994). A suit filed in state court may be removed to federal court if the federal court would have had original jurisdiction over the suit. 28 U.S.C. § 1441(a). A removed action must be remanded to state court if the federal court lacks subject matter jurisdiction. 28 U.S.C. § 1447(c). "The burden of establishing federal jurisdiction is on the party seeking removal, and the removal statute is strictly construed against removal jurisdiction." Prize Frize, Inc. v. Matrix (U.S.) Inc., 167 F.3d 1261, 1265 (9th Cir. 1999). "Federal jurisdiction must be rejected if there is any doubt as to the right of removal in the first instance." Gaus v. Miles, Inc., 980 F.2d 564, 566 (9th Cir. 1992).

In attempting to invoke this Court's diversity jurisdiction, Defendants must prove that there is complete diversity of citizenship between the parties and that the amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000. 28 U.S.C. § 1332. To establish citizenship for diversity purposes, a natural person must be a citizen of the United States and be domiciled in a particular state. Kantor v. Wellesley Galleries, Ltd., 704 F.2d 1088, 1090 (9th Cir. 1983). Persons are domiciled in the places they reside with the intent to remain or to which they intend to return. See Kanter v. Warner-Lambert Co., 265 F.3d 853, 857 (9th Cir. 2001). "A person residing in a given state is not necessarily domiciled there, and thus is not necessarily a citizen of that state." Id. For the purposes of diversity jurisdiction, a corporation is a citizen of any state where it is incorporated and of the state where it has its principal place of business. 28 U.S.C. § 1332(c); see also Indus. Tectonics, Inc. v. Aero Alloy, 912 F.2d 1090, 1092 (9th Cir. 1990).

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The Notice of Removal alleges that “Plaintiff alleges that he has ‘at all times mentioned herein’ been a resident of the County of Los Angeles, in the State of California. (Compl. ¶ 2.) For diversity purposes, a person is a ‘citizen’ of the state in which he is domiciled. A party’s residence is prima facie evidence of his domicile. Therefore, Plaintiff is a citizen of the State of California.” (Notice of Removal ¶ 6 (citations omitted).) As the Notice of Removal makes clear, however, Plaintiff’s Complaint only alleges Plaintiff’s residence. (See Compl. ¶ 2 (alleging that Plaintiff “is a resident of the State of California, County of Los Angeles”).) Because an individual is not necessarily domiciled where he or she resides, Defendants’ allegations of Plaintiff’s domiciliary and citizenship, based on an allegation of residence, are insufficient to establish Plaintiff’s citizenship. See Kanter v. Warner-Lambert Co., 265 F.3d at 857. “Absent unusual circumstances, a party seeking to invoke diversity jurisdiction should be able to allege affirmatively the actual citizenship of the relevant parties.” Kanter, 265 F.3d at 857; Bradford v. Mitchell Bros. Truck Lines, 217 F. Supp. 525, 527 (N.D. Cal. 1963) (“A petition [for removal] alleging diversity of citizenship upon information and belief is insufficient.”). As a result, Defendants’ allegations are insufficient to invoke this Court’s diversity jurisdiction.

Therefore, Defendants has failed to meet its burden to demonstrate the Court’s diversity jurisdiction. Accordingly, the Court remands this action to Los Angeles Superior Court, Case No. VC063703. See 28 U.S.C. § 1447(c).

IT IS SO ORDERED.